

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 HELSIN 01314 231600Z  
ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07  
NSAE-00 PRS-01 /025 W  
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R 231450Z JUN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
TO HQ USAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE/OIC  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1554

C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 1314

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MPOL, SWEL, FI, SW  
SUBJECT: CONTINUATION OF OPERATION SLEIGHBELLS

REF: YOUR MSG SAME SUBJECT DTG 170915Z JUNE 77

1. EMBASSY HELSINKI STRONGLY URGES THAT OPERATION SLEIGHBELLS BE GRANTED A WAIVER FROM AIRLIFT SERVICE INDUSTRIAL FUNDING (ASIF) BASED ON THE UNIQUE AND HIGHLY VALUED PUBLICITY THE US AND USAF DERIVE FROM THE ENDEAVOR.

2. FOR PAST 21 YEARS OPERATION SLEIGHBELLS HAS HELPED CONVEY IMPRESSION THAT US IS INDEED GENEROUS WITH ITS RESOURCES. THE HUMANITARIAN EFFORT IN REACHING OUT TO A REMOTE ORPHANAGE HAS IMPRESSED THE PEOPLE OF FINLAND AS FEW ACTIONS COULD. ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT AND MOST APPRECIATED HAS BEEN ACTUAL HUMAN CONTACT BETWEEN AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVES AND FINNISH PEOPLE INVOLVED.

3. RECENTLY APPROVED POLICY GUIDELINES FOR U.S./FINNISH RELATIONS DESCRIBE U.S. INTERESTS IN FINLAND AS FOLLOWS: PRIMARY U.S. INTEREST IN FINLAND IS TO MAXIMIZE LATTER'S NEUTRALITY, AFFIRM ITS INDEPENDENCE FROM THE SOVIET UNION, AND SUPPORT ITS POSITION AS WESTERN-ORIENTED, NON-COMMUNIST ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SOCIETY. BY DOING  
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SO, WE REDUCE POTENTIAL THREAT OF SOVIET MILITARY USE OF FINNISH TERRITORY, AND CONSEQUENT DETERIORATION THIS WOULD ENTAIL FOR NATO AND NORTHERN FLAND SECURITY. IN BROADER SENSE, WE HAVE AN INTEREST IN COORDINATING ON MAJOR INTERNATIONAL ISSUES WITH FINLAND AS A SOCIETY SHARING OUR BASIC PERCEPTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

4. IN SUPPORT OF ABOVE ESTABLISHED U.S. INTERESTS, SAME DOCUMENT LISTS U.S. POLICY OBJECTIVES DESIGNED TO PROTECT THOSE INTERESTS. POLICY OBJECTIVE D.3. STATES: CONTINUE OCCASIONAL VISITS TO FINLAND OF US FLEET UNITS, STUDENTS FROM SENIOR US SERVICE SCHOOLS, AND HIGH PROFILE GROUPS SUCH AS MILITARY BANDS OR ATHLETIC TEAMS.

5. IN THE OPINION OF THIS EMBASSY, OPERATION SLEIGH-BELLS EASILY QUALIFIES AS A MAJOR INSTRUMENT IN SUPPORT-ING U.S. INTERESTS IN FINLAND. IN ADDITION TO PURELY HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS OF OPERATION SLEIGHBELLS, LATTER IS HIGH PROFILE PUBLIC RELATIONS VENTURE THAT SHOULD BE MAINTAINED IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. FINNISH DEFENSE FORCES IN PARTICULAR WOULD BE HIGHLY DISAPPOINTED IF SLEIGH-BELLS TERMINATED.

6 CBS SENT A TELEVISION CREW TO RECORD ALL ASPECTS OF 1976 SLEIGHBELLS. THIS TAPE WAS CARRIED ON CBS EVENING NEWS JUST PRIOR TO CHRISTMAS, RESULTING IN FAVORABLE PUBLICITY FOR THE USAF. ABRUPT CANCELLATION NOW MIGHT PROVE EMBARRASSING TO THE USAF AFTER 1976 PUBLICITY.

7. 1977 IS THE 60TH YEAR OF FINNISH INDEPENDENCE (IT IS ALSO THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOVIET REVOLUTION). THE SOVIETS ARE TRYING PARTICULARLY HARD THIS YEAR TO CONFIDENTIAL

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EMPHASIZE COOPERATION AND SOLIDARITY BETWEEN THE USSR AND FINLAND. THIS FACT ALONE WOULD MAKE 1977 A POOR YEAR IN WHICH TO TERMINATE OPERATION SLEIGHBELLS, FOR ANY VENTURE THAT GIVES THE US VISIBILITY PARTICULARLY THIS YEAR IS NEEDED AND APPRECIATED.

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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